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Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

- 1-23. (Cancelled)
24. (Currently amended) A freestanding tool holding device comprising:
a first rail; and
a second rail vertically and horizontally offset from the first rail thereby forming an opening therebetween for receiving a lower end of an elongate member therein, the rails comprising generally parallel crossbars and the rails being further characterized by generally opposed edges for simultaneously contacting and exerting reaction forces on the elongate member when inserted and disposed in a leaning orientation therebetween, thereby restraining to lodge and restrain the elongate member in a generally vertical and leaning orientation ~~therebetween;~~ and
two end plates attached to side edges of the crossbars, whereby the end plates and the crossbars form a stable structure, said tool holding device lacking a base plate for supporting the lower end of the elongate member when received between the rails.
25. (Cancelled)
26. (Previously presented) A device according to claim 24 further characterized by at least one depression formed in at least one of the opposed edges.
27. (Cancelled)
28. (Previously presented) A device according to claim 26 wherein two depressions are formed in the opposed edges, and are generally aligned, to further restrain the elongate member when disposed therein.
29. (Cancelled).
30. (Currently amended) A device according to claim ~~[[29]]~~ 24 wherein outward extents of the end plates define a footprint and wherein a vertical projection through a center of gravity of an elongate member inserted between the crossbars lies within the footprint.

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31-38. (Cancelled)

39. (Currently amended) A method for storing elongate members in a generally vertical and leaning orientation, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a freestanding tool holding device comprising a first rail and a second rail, said rails vertically and horizontally offset from each other to form an opening therebetween for receiving a lower end of an elongate member therein, the rails comprising generally parallel crossbars and being further characterized by generally opposed edges for simultaneously contacting and exerting reaction forces on the elongate member when inserted and disposed in a leaning orientation therebetween, to lodge and restrain the elongate member in a generally vertical and leaning orientation therebetween the device further comprising two end plates attached to side edges of the crossbars, whereby the end plates and the crossbars form a stable structure; and

inserting a lower end of an elongate member in the opening between said rails without providing a base plate for supporting the lower end of the elongate member when received between said rails; and

leaning the elongate member against the rails.

40. (Cancelled)

41. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 39 further comprising forming at least one depression in at least one of said rails along said opposed edges.

42. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 39 further comprising forming two depressions along said opposed edges wherein said depressions are generally aligned, to further restrain the elongate member when the lower end thereof is disposed between said rails.